College of Humanities and the Arts · English & Comparative Literature

First Year Writing

ENGL 1A

Fall 2025   Sections 52, 53, 54   In Person   3 Unit(s)   08/20/2025 to 12/08/2025   Modified 08/25/2025

👤 Contact Information

Instructor:	Ume Ali (OO-me ah-LEE)
Email:	ume.ali@sjsu.edu
Office Hours:	W 12:00 - 1:00pm FOB 213 or Zoom (by appointment)
Class Days/Time/Classroom:	s52 MW 9:00 - 10:15am BBC 223 s53 MW 10:30 - 11:45pm BBC 223 s54 MW 1:30 - 2:45pm BBC 122
Prerequisites:	Reflection on College Writing (RCW)
GE/SJSU Studies Category:	GE Area A2 Written Communication

🕐 Course Information

Course Description

English 1A is a first-year writing composition course, an exploration of how we engage with and communicate our ideas/words. In this class we will explore fundamental rhetorical concepts and elevate our own writing processes. We will explore rhetorical styles and tools, and utilize these tools to both analyze and join social discourse. We will write two essays, one personal narrative (minor essay), and one

research paper (major final essay). These essays won't be assigned out of the blue. Rather, we will (wait for it) manifest them. That is, we will produce simpler smaller components of each essay, in the form of discussions or journal posts, which will culminate into portions of the final composition.

Required Texts

No textbook. Free online and digital texts: Online Writing Lab (owl.purdue.edu), *The Norton Field Guide to Writing*, and *Bad Ideas About Writing* (available as free pdfs on Canvas > Files). Please download onto your device for easy offline access.

Course Content

Diversity:

SJSU studies place emphasis on diversity (in reading material, authors, and audiences). We will engage in integrated reading and writing assignments to construct our own arguments on complex issues that generate meaningful public debate.

Writing:

Writing assignments give us repeated practice in all phases of the writing process: prewriting, organizing, writing, revising, and editing. This class requires a minimum of 8,000 words, which we will accumulate by writing discussion posts, journals, self reflections, components of essays, and two essays.

Reading:

There will be a substantial amount of reading for this class, some of which will come from assigned texts and some of which will be from sources we locate on our own.

Revision and Reflection:

Throughout the semester we will reflect on our personal and lived experiences, our rhetorical choices, and our writing processes. These metacognitive reflections will inform class discussions as well as the work we submit. We will also focus on revising drafts, the most important step in any writing process.

💻 Course Description and Requisites

English 1A is an introductory course that prepares students to join scholarly conversations across the university. Students develop reading skills, rhetorical sophistication, and writing styles that give form and coherence to complex ideas for various audiences, using a variety of genres. GE Area: A2

Prerequisite: Completion of Reflection on College Writing

Letter Graded

✴ Classroom Protocols

ENGL 1A Course Content

Diversity: SJSU is a diverse campus. As such, our course is designed to include an emphasis on a diverse range of voices and viewpoints. We will engage in integrated reading and writing assignments to construct our own arguments on complex issues that generate meaningful public discussions.

Writing: Writing is at the heart of our class. Our exploration of writing will allow us to prepare ourselves and each other for academic and real-world writing scenarios. Assignments give students repeated practice in all phases of the writing process: prewriting, organizing, writing, revising, and editing. Our class requires a minimum of 8000 words, at least 4000 of which must be in revised final draft form. More specific descriptions and instructions will be distributed for all major assignments in class.

Reading: There will be a substantial amount of reading for our class, some of which will come from texts I select (listed below) and some of which will be from sources you locate.

Final Experience: We will compile a portfolio at the end of the semester that includes selected examples of your writing produced for our class, as well as materials from your RCW Canvas course. We will talk more about the portfolio later in the semester.

Time Commitment

Success in ENGL 1A is based on the expectation that students will spend, for each unit of credit, a minimum of 45 hours over the length of the course (normally three hours per unit per week) for instruction, preparation/studying, or course related activities, including but not limited to internships, labs, and clinical practica. Other course structures will have equivalent workload expectations as described in the syllabus.

Final Examination or Evaluation

In ENGL 1A, our learning culminates in a digital Reflection and Portfolio Assignment. In this assignment, we will gather samples of our writing that demonstrate our learning; we will write a reflection essay that explains what we have learned, how we learned it, and how we will use it in future learning; and we will submit our portfolio for consideration to other people in the first-year writing program. This is our chance to identify and articulate what we've learned and what we'll take forward with us into future learning/writing experiences.

Faculty Web Page and MYSJSU Messaging
Course materials such as syllabus, handouts, notes, assignment instructions, etc. can be found on the Canvas Learning Management System course login website. You're responsible for regularly checking with the messaging system through MySJSU to learn of any updates. For help with using Canvas see Canvas Student Resources page.

Program Policies
First-Year Writing policies are listed at the following website: https://www.sjsu.edu/english/frosh/program-policies.php (https://www.sjsu.edu/english/frosh/program-policies.php)

⊞ Program Information

Welcome to this General Education course.

SJSU's General Education Program establishes a strong foundation of versatile skills, fosters curiosity about the world, promotes ethical judgment, and prepares students to engage and contribute responsibly and cooperatively in a multicultural, information-rich society. General education classes integrate areas of study and encourage progressively more complex and creative analysis, expression, and problem solving.

The General Education Program has three goals:

> **Goal 1:** To develop students' core competencies for academic, personal, creative, and professional pursuits.
> **Goal 2:** To enact the university's commitment to diversity, inclusion, and justice by ensuring that students have the knowledge and skills to serve and contribute to the well-being of local and global communities and the environment.
> **Goal 3:** To offer students integrated, multidisciplinary, and innovative study in which they pose challenging questions, address complex issues, and develop cooperative and creative responses.

More information about the General Education Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) can be found on the GE website (https://sjsu.edu/general-education/ge-requirements/overview/learning-outcomes.php).

◎ Course Goals

GE Learning Outcomes (GELO)

Upon successful completion of the course, students will be able to

1. **Read** actively and rhetorically;
2. **Perform** the essential steps in the writing process (prewriting, organizing, composing, revising, and editing) and demonstrate an awareness of said performance;
3. **Articulate** an awareness of and write according to the rhetorical features of texts, such as purpose, audience, context, and rhetorical appeals;
4. **Integrate** your ideas and those of others by explaining, analyzing, developing, and criticizing ideas effectively in several genres;
5. **Demonstrate** college-level language use, clarity, and grammatical proficiency in writing.

Canvas

Course materials such as syllabus, handouts, notes, assignment instructions, etc. can be found in Canvas > Files. For the most updated information on discussions, deadlines, and assignments, please check this google doc. All lessons and assignments are tentative and subject to change. Deadlines and lesson plans will be updated as we move through the semester. Check back regularly!

Late work

Late work is **NOT** accepted.

📊 Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs)

General Education Learning Outcomes (GELOs):

GE Area A2: Written Communication

Written Communication I courses cultivate an understanding of the writing process and the goals, dynamics, and genres of written communication, with special attention to the nature of writing at the university. A grade of C- or better designates that a student has successfully oriented reading and writing practice in English to support college level research and learning and to share learning with C- or better is a CSU graduation requirement.

GE Area A2 Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of an Area A2 course, students should be able to:

1. demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the content, context, effectiveness, and forms of written communication;
2. perform essential steps in the writing process (prewriting, organizing, composing, revising, and editing);
3. articulate an awareness of and write according to the rhetorical features of texts, such as purpose, audience, context, and rhetorical appeals;
4. integrate their ideas and those of others by synthesizing, explaining, analyzing, developing, and criticizing ideas effectively in several genres; and
5. demonstrate college-level language use, clarity, and grammatical abilities in writing.

Writing Practice: Students will write a minimum of 8000 words, at least 4000 of which must be in revised final draft form.

📘 Course Materials

Required Texts

No textbook. Free online and digital texts: Online Writing Lab (owl.purdue.edu), *The Norton Field Guide to Writing*, and *Bad Ideas About Writing* (available as free pdfs on Canvas > Files). Please download onto your device for easy offline access.

✅ Course Requirements and Assignments

Course Requirements

SJSU classes are designed such that in order to be successful, you are expected to spend a minimum of 3 hours per unit per week, studying, preparing for class, participating in course activities, and completing assignments. These activities and assignments include:

1. Projects
2. Process
3. Essays
4. Engagement

Assignments (all assignments will be submitted on Canvas).

Projects: We will write 5-10 prompt-based journal posts for our Advocacy Project. Posts should not simply summarize or repeat points raised in readings or class, but should build upon those points to advance our discussion. These posts are informal and meant to reveal how we are processing information and providing our personal insight. Advice for writing posts: be honest and keep it simple. Some of these posts will be uploaded to our project webpage and will be submitted as a URL.

Process: As this course is geared towards understanding writing as a process, not just a product, we will incorporate the necessary steps (pre-writing, writing, revising, reflecting etc.) to build effective writing habits which can be applied in any writing situation. We will brainstorm, outline, pre-write, write, workshop and revise. Components of this process (drafts, workshop feedback etc) will be submitted and assessed throughout the semester.

Essays: We will write one major essay, and many smaller essay responses. Essays aren't assigned with only a prompt and a deadline in the near future. Essays will be assessed for development and improvement rather than a finished product. Rather, we will produce the essay in steps, scaffolding the process for clarity and success. All work should be typed, double spaced, and in 12pt Times New Roman font.

Engagement: Students will earn engagement (or participation) credit for actively engaging with the material we cover, with their peers, and with their own work. As this is an in-person course, participation points are based on attendance, responses to daily discussion boards, as well as your verbal participation in large and small group class discussions.

✔ Grading Information

Minimum Grading Policy

This course uses the minimum grading method of assessment. This means, the minimum score for all assignments is 50%, and no zeroes will be given (as long as work is submitted). Hopefully, this encourages us to attempt and submit all work (regardless of quality). Notice that process papers (outlines, drafts,

revisions) are worth 40% of the final grade. This is intentional so that we put more effort into revision, iterating on components of the essay, rather than worrying about one big final grade. For example, a crappy first draft of an intro paragraph earns an automatic 5/10, completing it well (according to the rubric below) may earn the remaining 5 points for a total score of 10/10. Revising the intro and improving it, provides an opportunity to earn another 10 points for revision. The whole point of minimum grading, then, is to place emphasis on revision rather than assigning a weighty grade to an end product.

5 pt Rubric				
Points	5	4	3	2.5
Description/Criteria	Completed assignment according to prompt. Clear, focused, organized, insightful response.	Mostly clear, additional details/insight would be helpful.	Some engagement with prompt, some ideas presented. Could more be more focused, main idea needed.	Minimal or missing work.

10 pt Rubric						
Points	10	9	8	7	6	5

Description/Criteria	Excellent, thoroughly completed work. Clear focus. Responded to all parts of prompt, organized response in logical manner, with a beginning, middle, and end.	Very strong ideas. Additional details/insight would be helpful to overall response. Good focus. Structure could be more intentional, thoughtful.	Additional detail/insight would be helpful to strengthen presentation of ideas. Responds to the prompt, though response can be structured in a more organized and coherent manner.	Shows some demonstration of understanding the prompt, response seems to address some components of the prompt while missing aspects. Some thoughts and insights presented. More clarity/focus needed.	Minimal engagement with the prompt. Some scattered thoughts. Response needs focus/clarity.	Did not attempt, complete, or address the prompt.

🏛 University Policies

Per [University Policy S16-9 (PDF) (http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf)](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf), relevant university policy concerning all courses, such as student responsibilities, academic integrity, accommodations, dropping and adding, consent for recording of class, etc. and available student services (e.g. learning assistance, counseling, and other resources) are listed on the [Syllabus Information (https://www.sjsu.edu/curriculum/courses/syllabus-info.php)](https://www.sjsu.edu/curriculum/courses/syllabus-info.php) web page. Make sure to visit this page to review and be aware of these university policies and resources.

📅 Course Schedule

Course Schedule

***The schedule is tentative and subject to change at any given time. It is the student's responsibility to check Canvas for updated assignment deadlines and assigned work.

Week	Date	Monday		Wednesday

1	Aug 18		Aug 20	Introductions & Ice Breaker *Request Adobe Creative Cloud Syllabus+Discord Server Activity: Emailing your professor
2	Aug 25	Discussion: Audience, Purpose, Context "Rhetorical Situations" Purpose & Audience in Norton (pg 53-60) Small Group Activity: Zombie Apocalypse Due: Syllabus Contract	Aug 27	Discussion: Rhetorical Analysis In Class: Link Audience, Purpose, Context Assign: Profile Collage Project + Adobe check Rhetorical Artifact Scavenger Hunt (due at the end of class)
3	Sep 1	Labor Day Holiday (NO CLASSES)	Sep 3	**Meet at Student Union Ballroom** for **Adobe Workshop** (attendance check at workshop)
4	Sep 8	Due: Profile Collage + Share in small groups Adobe Express Scavenger Hunt	Sep 10	Discussion: Branding Project (groups) Derive your brand's ethos (sustainability, equity, fair trade, unity etc) Create aesthetic (design, materials etc) Due: Draft of Branding Ethos (ie mission statement)
5	Sep 15	Rhetorical Appeals Understanding Rhetorical Appeals Link Logos, Pathos, Ethos Video Zombie Apocalypse 2.0	Sep 17	Due: Branding Ad + Ethos (on Adobe) Presentations + Prizes

6	Sep 22	Discussion: Video Rhetorical Analysis Summary vs Analysis Activity (Super Bowl Ad) Groups: Rhetorical Analysis of Will McAvoy's monologue (from the pilot episode of "The Newsroom") text & video	Sep 24	Discussion: Begin Advocacy Project (AP) Social causes Gen Z care about Due Tuesday: Proposal
7	Sep 29	Discussion: Digital Storytelling + Graffiti (all links are listed on the weekly playlist for this week. Please arrive having read/watched all) Graffiti Activity (groups) Due Fri: AP Individual Graffiti Analysis on Adobe	Oct 1	AP: Ad Analysis Discussion: Print Ads (in groups) Due: Ad Analysis on Adobe (Tue night)
8	Oct 6	Discussion: Rhetoric of Memes Due: Meme Analysis on Adobe (Friday midnight)	Oct 8	Discussion: Political Cartoons: Criticism via Satire Media bias, blindspots, political leanings Group Activity
9	Oct 13	Due: Cartoon Analysis on Adobe (Friday by midnight) Discussion: Rhetorical analysis of "I'm Just Ken" Barbie Group Activity	Oct 15	**Group Presentations + Ken PR Reflection** **Song Lyric Analysis due Friday**
10	Oct 20	**Assign Film Analysis Essay + Brainstorm**	Oct 22	**Discussion: Research + Annotated/Evaluative Bibliographies** **Due: Annotated Bib (due by the end of class)**
11	Oct 27	Research Basics	Oct 29	Forming an essay
12	Nov 3	**Rewatch your chosen movie and take notes!**	Nov 5	Thesis Workshop Activity
13	Nov 10	Due: Outline + Intro paragraph draft	Nov 12	Workshop Due Sunday night: Film Essay Draft

14	Nov 17	Intro to Portfolios Due: Self Reflection	Nov 19	Workshop
15	Nov 24	Self Reflection Workshop Work on Adobe Presentation	Nov 26	Prep for presentations
16	Dec 1	Final Adobe Presentations	Dec 3	Final Adobe Presentations
17	Dec 8	Last Day of Classes (NO FINAL)		